

Cabinet Attacks McGovern on Nixon Network

By Lou Cannon *10/31/72*
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The Nixon re-election committee opened the final week of the campaign Monday with a concerted Cabinet-level attack on every aspect of Sen. George McGovern's domestic policy proposals.

Campaign chief Clark MacGregor, describing McGovern's proposals as "only a mess of pottage," issued statements from nine Cabinet secretaries and one agency head. Typical of them was the statement of Secretary of Labor James D. Hodgson, who declared:

"If Sen. McGovern is elected President, the American working man will have to face up to rampant inflation, lower real wages, more taxes, increased welfare rolls, fewer jobs and sharply weaker national defenses."

At the same time, the re-election committee launched a national "Nixon network" consisting of a daily 10-minute radio program made available for use on 560 Mutual stations and affiliates. The first of these programs, broadcast Monday, featured a message from President Nixon predicting that the next four years would be "the best four years in American history."

The program also included a pep talk on getting out the vote from Deputy Campaign Director Fred Malek, a message from actor Charles Heston and an attack on The Washington Post by White House domestic affairs counselor John Ehrlichman, who said that The Post had tried to establish complicity in the Watergate case "by accusation rather than facts."

The message from Heston criticized McGovern for being motivated by a "deep feeling of national guilt."

While there were occasional

references to Vietnam and the prisoners of war in the statements issued by MacGregor and the Cabinet officers, the messages essentially were an attempt to depict McGovern as domestically incompetent and radical.

Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz said that McGovern would do away with the Agricultural Act of 1970 and end "the new, greater freedom to plant that farmers have gained under the act." Secretary of Housing and Urban Development George Romney claimed that McGovern had extended his "credibility gap" by releasing a "hastily contrived, ill-considered, cut-and-paste hodgepodge" report from his urban affairs policy panel. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Elliot L. Richardson said that McGovern's latest welfare proposal "would create a new army of federal employees and cost the nation's taxpayers an additional \$36 billion a year."

Secretary of Interior Rogers C. B. Morton contended that McGovern's sponsorship of only 10 environmental bills

during 12 years in the Senate was "a very real index of his lack of concern—and none has emerged from the committee to which it was sent."

Unlike the other Cabinet officials, Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst attempted to defend the Nixon administration against specific McGovern criticisms in a statement headed, "Untrue Statements by Sen. McGovern on Justice Department Matters, with Official Responses."

Kleindienst said McGovern had incorrectly accused the Nixon administration of failing to support gun control legislation or to take action against drug abuse. Kleindienst also took issue with a statement by McGovern that the Nixon administration departed from historical precedent in asking law enforcement officials to "police themselves" on wiretapping.

"Such wiretapping has been used by the federal government at least as early as 1940, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized its use by the Attorney General," Kleindienst said. "Every subsequent administration has used national security wiretapping.... The Kennedy administration, for example, used national security wiretapping much more extensively than the Nixon administration."

Summarizing the statements, MacGregor said they showed that the "McGovern programs, from his welfare schemes to his disastrous plans to raise taxes and prices, disqualify his pretensions to lead America—in peace or war."

The radio programs on the Nixon network were described by a committee official as having the tri-fold purpose of inspiring volunteers, boosting voter turnout and refuting McGovern. They also were described as something of a bargain for the committee, which purchased the line from the Mutual network for \$40,000.

The programs will be aired at 7:35 a.m. each day except Sunday in every time zone.

Officials in the November Group, the ad-buying arm of the re-election committee, said that a minimum of \$220,000 and a maximum of \$265,000 will be spent for radio advertising in the final week of the campaign, including the costs of the Nixon network and three more radio speeches by the President.

A spokesman at the McGovern campaign committee estimated that the McGovern radio budget for the final week is \$200,000.